THE

CONFESSION

OF

Francis Nicholson,

(Who committed that most barbarous Murther upon the Body of *John Dimbleby*, Servant to Mr. *Marriot*) at the Place of Execution, which was upon the Green over against *Hampton-Court*, and near the Place where he did the Murther, on *Wednesday* last, it being the 27*th* of *October* 1680, who was afterwards carried to *Hounslow-Heath*, and there hang'd up in Chains.

2 *Nov.* 1680.

AS soon as he came under the Gibbet, looking up, he said, Oh Lord! what have I brought my self to! the Lord pity my poor Soul. One being in the Cart, askt him, *Francis*, how is it with you? have you made your peace with God, and got an assurance of the pardon of your sins? He answered, I hope it is well with me, the Lord be merciful to my poor Soul. Then a worthy Minister spake to him, and said, *Francis*, the Lord hath now given you a long time of Repentance to make your peace with God in, and I hope you have made a good use of it. I desire you now, as well in charity to your own Soul, as in justice to others, to make an honest and ingenuous Confession, and that you would neither accuse the Innocent, or excuse the Guilty, but clear your Conscience now you are entering upon the borders of Eternity; you have but a few minutes to live, do not deceive your Soul, but speak the truth, and let us know what did induce you to this great wickedness for which you are now to die within a few minutes. The Coachman being then by, saith *Francis*, This man is an innocent man, I freely acquit him, grasping him by the hand. He further said, he is as innocent of the Fact as the Child unborn; and I desire all persons to take notice of it, for I have done him a great

great deal of wrong. Oh Lord! that I ſhould accuſe an innocent perſon! Saith he to the Coachman, I clear thee with all my heart, and I earneſtly beg your pardon. Then the Coachman replied, I freely forgive thee with all my heart. The Lord forgive thee, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt forgive thee, ſaith the Miniſter, Which I hope he will. Then ſaith *Francis*, None ſet me on to do this moſt barbarous murther but the Devil; it was he that inſtigated me, and ſet me on to do it: For I had made a Vow to kill a man before I went from *Hampton-Court*, and the Devil appeared to me and told me, I was damn'd if I did not perform my Vow. Whereupon I was never at quiet or reſt till I had acted that moſt inhumane Murther. Then the Miniſter askt him, What papers or Moneys did you take from him, for there is ſeveral Bonds and Writings, and other things, beſides Moneys, that is wanting? *Francis* then anſwered, I took no papers nor Writings, but only twenty Shillings in Moneys, which I took out of his pocket, and a Watch; as I am a dying man I took nothing elſe. Then the Miniſter askt him this, Did ever any perſon ſet you on to do this Murther, or induce you with the hopes of a pardon to impeach any perſon? *Francis* anſwered, No. Then ſaith the Miniſter, Why did you Impeach the Coachman, and charge him as the Author of the Murther, and that he ſhould hire you to do it? Saith *Francis*, Mr. *Stephenſon* at the *Toy* askt me (when I was before the Juſtice who committed me) whether any one did not ſet me on to do it, and whether the Coachman had not hir'd me? and this is all I know of it, as I am now entering into Eternity; and that put me in mind to accuſe the Coachman, and this is all I know of it; and ſo the Lord forgive me. Oh that I ſhould be the murtherer of an Innocent perſon! Oh that I ſhould take away a poor mans life, and that in ſuch a barbarous manner! The Lord be mercifnl to my poor Soul. Oh how gracious God hath been to my poor ſoul! that hath given me ſo long time of Repentance. He might have ſnatcht me away in my younger days, but Oh what would have become of my poor ſoul, if I had died before I had made my peace with God, or if I had died immediately upon the murther! I care not for my Body, ſo my Soul may be ſaved; for the death of the Body is nothing, but the eternal death and damnation of the Soul is terrible.

Then ſaith the Miniſter, pray make ſome Confeſſion to the people. Which *Francis* did to this effect, Oh you that are here come to ſee me a poor young man die a moſt ſhameful death, in the prime of my youth. I do declare before you all, as I ſhall anſwer it before my God and Judg within a few minutes, that I took neither Box nor Writings, nor any thing elſe, but only 20 Shillings in moneys, and a Watch, and I clear the Coachman before you all, for he is innocent

of

of it, the Lord forgive me for it. Then the Miniſter made a moſt excellent Prayer; which ended the Young-man ſpake to the people, (as he was going to aſcend the Ladder) and ſaid, The Lord forgive me, the Lord forgive me; Oh that you all would take warning by my Death; and pray take heed of breaking the Sabbath, and ill company, and drinking; for it was Sabbath-breaking firſt, and then ill company, and drinking, which brought me to do this great wickedneſs, and to cauſe me to run headlong to the Devil: The Lord be merciful to my poor Soul. Lord! I am going out of this world; the Lord forgive my Soul; the Lord pardon my ſins, and receive my Soul. I beſeech thee, good Lord, grant me an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and that I may ſit at thy Right Hand in Heaven when I depart this life. Oh! that I ſhould commit ſuch a horrid fact, which ſhould cauſe me now to dye like a dog, and to ſuffer ſuch a ſhameful death: If I had been taken away before now, I might have been in Hells everlaſting burnings; but God hath been merciful to my Soul. Oh that you all would take notice by my ſhameful death, and not break the Sabbath: Oh that you all would take notice by me, and that God would pardon all your ſins; for it was Sabbath-breaking that brought me to my ruine. Oh Eternity! Eternity! Oh improve well your time, and conſider your latter end, and often think of Eternity: I am now going into Eternity, the Lord be merciful to my poor Soul now and for evermore. Oh Lord receive my Soul at thy Right hand in Heaven to all Eternity: Oh Lord! thou who didſt dye for ſins, receive my poor Soul, and that I may have benefit by thy death, and that my Soul may be received into the Kingdom of Heaven: The death of the body is nothing, but the Eternal damnation of the Soul is ſad: Oh who can live in Hells eternal torments: But Oh Lord! take me into a better World now I am going out of this wicked World, Oh Lord receive me into thy Paradiſe, and pardon my ſins. Then he ſaid the Lords Prayer, and afterwards ſaid, The Lord lift up my heart to Heaven: Oh the Devil, it was the Devil that lead my heart away; the Lord tread him down, that deceives ſo many poor Souls, and which hath deceived my Soul: Oh that I may make my peace with God now, before I go hence: Oh that all theſe good people would put up their prayers for me. Then ſaid the Miniſter, the Lord receive your Soul into eternal life; then ſaith *Francis*, the Lord ſave me, and receive me into thine everlaſting Arm; the Lord receive a poor wicked ſinner as I have been. Oh Death! Oh Lord God look upon me in mercy: Then one ſtanding by ſaid, Oh Remember him that ſaved the Thief upon the Croſs; upon which he ſaid, Oh the Devil that hath tormented me! Oh the Lord be with me,

me; and the Lord be with thee, saith he to the Coachman, for I clear you; and the Lord forgive thee, saith the Coachman to him again, for I forgive thee.

One being desired by some persons, ask'd him this Question, Whether any one did induce him to Impeach the Coachman upon the promise of life, or out of a grudg and disgust to the Coachman, or to the Person of Quality whom he served? Oh! saith the young man, None but the Devil. Then just before he was turned off the Ladder, he said, Lord Jesus Christ Remember me now, Lord Jesus Christ Remember me now, take me into thy paradise, take me into thy paradise: Then he called out for *Goody Hart*; whereupon she was call'd, but could not be found: Oh, saith he, *Goody Hart* is a good Woman, the Lord bless her; the Lord Jesus Christ forgive me, and be with me. Then he said the Lords Prayer again, which done, he said, the Lord bless every soul, and my Soul: but seeing *Goody Harts* daughter, he said fare you well *Betty*, fare you well, I am going out of this World, Oh pray for me: the Lord (saith she) forgive you, and receive your Soul: Oh saith he, the Lord Jesus Christ receive my Soul: Oh all good people take notice by me; Lord be with my Soul. And so was turned off the Ladder.

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